

Quality - Information Technologies - Consumer

Companies and consumers live in a world where the Internet is one of its defining elements, information technologies increasingly marking all the activities undertaken by them. With increased access to information, with a strong desire for knowledge, and with increased standards, both companies and consumers pay an important attention to quality and information technologies, which are, on the one hand, a sure path to success for an entrepreneur and, on the other hand, the confirmation of a correct choice for a consumer. Therefore, in a society increasingly characterized by words and phrases such as “information”, “internet”, “social media”, “standards”, the orientation of the academic environment towards research in the fields of quality, information technologies, and consumer is inevitable.

This special number of the journal highlights the concern of a series of researchers in the economics area on specific issues, respectively regarding aspects associated with quality, information technologies, and consumer.

Regarding the **quality of products and services**, the articles in this number are distinguished by the importance given to issues such as the implementation of quality management, benchmarking, good practices preceding the implementation of the system of management, and the quality of services, as follows:

- *“The Impact of the Implementation of ISO 9000 Quality Management System on the Customer Satisfaction Evaluation Process by the Romanian SMEs”* highlights the degree to which SMEs use the results of evaluation and monitoring of customer satisfaction in the process of redesigning and improvement of the quality of products and services;
- *“The Necessity of Implementing a Quality Management System in the Romanian Medical Units. An Approach from the Patient’s Point of View”* approaches – from the perspective of quality management – the problems of the Romanian health system and the deficiencies which influence the quality of the provided services, accomplishing an analysis of the consumer’s perception regarding the quality of health services, and the necessity of implementing a quality management system in the units providing health services;
- *“Sustainable Success in Higher Education by Sharing the Best Practices as a Result of Benchmarking Process”* reviews the main benchmarking criteria, based on the quality indicators used by the higher education institutions and presents new indicators of reference as a result of the inter-universities cooperation;
- *“Good Practices Preceding the Implementation of the System of Management of Environment, on Small and Medium Enterprises”* highlights an exemplary performance of a small organisation that managed to settle an informal system of management of environment, built up with much rigour, involvement, respect for society and environment, with the aim to provide a series of good practices for the business environment – in the SMEs area – and methods of approach in environmental practices analysis and to emphasize the imperatives in this area of action for organizations;
- *“Quality Uncertainty as a Barrier to Business Services Development”* outlines a review of existing conceptual models of service quality assessment, discusses the

implications of information asymmetry, and explores – based on the information obtained from the selected service providers - the situation in specific industries, as well as the solutions for overcoming the current shortcomings;

- “*The Development of Touristic Services through Individual and Organizational Learning. Study Case: Romania and Spain*” aims to establish and to design development strategies for services in SMEs active in the tourism branch, outlining the weaknesses and the strengths of touristic services management approaches and defining recommendations.

The articles in this number related to **information technologies** highlight issues such as social media, web sites design, and their impact on companies’ activity, as follows:

- “*Estimating the Importance of Social Media in Consumers’ Education and Information Using New Techniques*” outlines the results of a research carried out with the aim to highlight the relationship between the new consumer and bio food;

- “*The Relationship Communication Structure - Uncertainty Avoidance Reflected in Romanian Websites Design*” offers a perspective about the way in which the communication structure specific to various cultures, the uncertainty avoidance behaviour, and the cognitive features of gender influence the design of Romanian websites;

- “*The Impact of Information Technologies on the Organization and Functioning of the Company*”, based on an empirical research, highlights the IT impact on the company.

The articles dealing with the **new consumer** focus on the perception of quality and on the psycho-sensorial value of food, and also on relationships between migration and food consumption habits, as follows:

- “*Mutations in the Foodstuff Quality Perception of the New Consumers in Romania*” presents the objectives of a research project developed in order to highlight the mutations that occurred in the foodstuff quality perception of the new consumers from Romania;

- “*The Psycho-sensorial Value of the Food Products – A Provocative Component in Purchase Decision*” focuses on the necessity to design the psycho-sensorial value of processed foods, and on the importance of educating and informing the consumers for a better capacity to get oriented on the market, and implicitly, for a right purchase decision;

- “*Potential Connections between Migration and Immigrants’ Food Consumption Habits. The Case of Romanian Immigrants in Andalusia, Spain*” - based on analyzing a set of information obtained through a field research carried out during January-June 2011 among Romanian immigrants in Andalusia, Spain - highlights the potential relationships between migration and food consumption habits of immigrants, with an emphasis on a series of factors that could contribute to the establishment of these relationships.

Quality, information technologies, and consumers are key elements of the contemporary society, with implications in all areas. This requires that a fair and comprehensive approach to any socio-economic phenomenon to consider its relationship with at least one of the elements mentioned above.

**Editor-in-chief,
Vasile Dinu**